

Cuba Gets Two Soviet Patrol Craft

United Press International

The Defense Department said yesterday the Soviet Union has sent Cuba two speedy patrol boats that can carry anti-ship missiles which could be used against U.S. ships.

The U.S. Navy has no defense against the missile, called the Styx. It was a Styx fired from an Egyptian patrol boat that sank the Israeli destroyer Eilat in one of Egypt's few successful operations against the Israelis in 1967.

Pentagon spokesman Jerry Friedheim said it was the first time Cuba had received the Osa-class patrol boats. However, he said Cuba has long had 18 smaller Komar-class boats, which are equipped for two Styx missiles.

The Osa boats are twice as heavy as the Komars and can carry four of the missiles, which have a range of about 15 miles.

SOVIET SENDING CUBA NEW MISSILE BOATS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 (AP)

—Pentagon sources report that the Soviet Union has started to send Cuba bigger and more heavily armed missile-firing patrol boats.

The first two boats, of a class known as OSA, reached Havana in mid-January after being towed across the Atlantic by Soviet tugs. They arrived nearly a month after Cuban gunboat attacks on two unarmed Panamanian-registered freighters in the Caribbean brought United States warnings of possible air and navel counter-action.

The 35-knot Soviet boats carry four missiles with high-explosive warheads and a range of 15 miles.

Last October, the Soviet Union delivered MIG-21 fighters to Cuba for the first time in more than four years. The provision of newer and more-powerful missile boats is viewed by some Pentagon officials as another indication that the Soviet Union is embarked on a program of strengthening Cuba's armed forces.

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Cubans Get New Russian Missile Boats

Associated Press

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They arrived nearly a month after Cuban gunboat attacks on two unarmed Panamanian-registered freighters in the Caribbean brought U.S. warnings of possible air and naval counteraction.

The 35-knot OSAs mount four Styx missiles with high-explosive warheads and a range of about 15 miles.

The U.S. Navy has been concerned about the Styx since the Egyptians sank an Israeli destroyer with one of them in 1967.

The new 200-ton OSA craft have a greater operating range and carry twice as many missile launchers as the 18 older Komar-class patrol boats furnished to Cuba by the Russians in the 1960s.